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RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000931

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/19/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [EG](#) [IR](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN IRAQI NEIGHBORS PLUS  
MEETING, BUT FM GUL MAY NOT ATTEND

REF: A. STATE 50497

[1](#)B. ANKARA 832

[1](#)C. ANKARA 805 AND PREVIOUS

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Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Turkey will send a delegation to Sharm el-Shaikh to participate in the May 3-4 meetings of the International Compact with Iraq and the Neighbors Plus Ministerial, but FM Gul may be unable to make the trip due to domestic political requirements. GOT Special Envoy for Iraq Amb. Oguz Celikkol said FM Mottaki, who visited here on April 17, complained about the Sharm venue for the ICI and Iraq Neighbors Plus meetings, and he lobbied for Turkey to join a bid to go back to the Neighbors-Only first meeting agreed in Baghdad in March. FM Gul rejected this. Celikkol also noted that Iraq has asked Turkey to host a meeting of the energy working group, one of three committees established under the Neighbors process.  
END SUMMARY

TURKEY TO ATTEND BUT NOT CLEAR AT WHAT LEVEL  
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[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador conveyed the Secretary's oral message (ref a) urging participation in the International Compact with Iraq (ICI) meeting to GOT Special Envoy for Iraq Ambassador Oguz Celikkol. Celikkol said Turkey intends to send a delegation to Sharm el-Shaikh for May 3-4 meetings both of the ICI and the Iraq Neighbors Plus Ministerial, though they have not yet announced that decision publicly nor responded to the Egyptian invitation. The GOT is still trying to decide the level of its representation, with the participation of FM Gul in question due to domestic requirements related to Turkey's presidential election process, which will likely be in full swing that week.

IRANIANS UNHAPPY WITH SHARM EL-SHAikh...SYRIANS WAITING TO  
HEAR GOT VIEWS  
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13. (C) Celikkol noted the Iranians are very unhappy with PM Maliki's decision to hold the Neighbors Plus meeting in Egypt. This was the main subject of FM Mottaki's visit here April 17. Mottaki complained about Zebari's lack of consultation regarding Sharm, and he lobbied for a return to the Baghdad formula -- Neighbors Only in Egypt first and Neighbors-Plus to follow. Celikkol said Mottaki was going to Damascus next to make the same pitch. Celikkol made clear that Ankara still doesn't like how the decisions played out, but that Gul was very clear: The decision on Sharm has already been announced, it will go ahead, and the important thing is Iraq, not the venue.

14. (C) Referring to Turkish press reports indicating Iranian officials had tied their participation in the meeting in Egypt to the release of Iranian officials arrested by coalition forces in Erbil, Ambassador asked Celikkol whether the Iranians had raised the issue. Celikkol said Mottaki complained about Iranian officials remaining in custody but neither attempted to connect their release to Iranian participation in the ministerial nor requested GOT assistance in securing their release. Iran's connecting the release of its officials and participation at Sharm had been reported to the Turks by Iraqi government officials, according to Celikkol.

15. (C) Syria has also reportedly expressed misgivings about the Iraqi decision and had asked the GOT for its views on participation. Celikkol said the Turks have not yet gotten back to the SARG but will, once the GOT decides who is going. He did not express a view as to whether or not the Syrians will attend.

IRAQ REQUESTS TURKEY HOST MEETING OF NEIGHBORS PROCESS ENERGY WORKING GROUP

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16. (C) According to Celikkol, Iraq had responded favorably to an earlier Turkish request to participate in all three working groups established as part of the Neighbors process. Turkey had initially only been included in the energy working group but had asked that it also be able to participate in groups focused on border security and refugees. In its positive reply, Iraq also asked the Turks to consider hosting in Ankara an initial meeting of the energy group, preferably prior to the May 3-4 meetings in Egypt. Celikkol told us that trying to organize such a meeting in the short time remaining would not be feasible. It might make most sense to have concurrent meetings of all three working groups in one venue, sometime in May following the ministerial. He seemed open to Turkey being a host, but regarded the question as premature.

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WILSON